

Multi-Line Telephone System (PBX/Centrex) Compliance with Enhanced 9-1-1

Multi-Line Telephone System compliance with Enhanced 9-1-1 is addressed in 30 V.S.A., Chapter 87, §7057. The statute requires that multi-line telephone systems provide the same level of Enhanced 9-1-1 service that other end users in Vermont receive. It is essential that every telephone connected to a multi-line telephone system provide a callback number and specific locatable address where the 9-1-1 call originated. The specific locatable address must also include a building name or number, floor and/or room number. This information needs to be sent from the telephone system through the enhanced 9-1-1 network to a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) when someone dials 9-1-1.

While the statute empowers the Board to authorize waivers, it does not mean that multi-line telephone system owners, in being granted a waiver, are absolved from compliance. They still must ensure that they provide their end users the same level of service as other users receive. The Board may grant a waiver in circumstances in which the essential purpose of providing adequate emergency service is not compromised; see ***Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Multi-Line Telephone System Waiver Criteria***.

The owner of the multi-line telephone system can be held liable for failure to provide adequate access to emergency services leading to injury or loss of property.

Emergency service providers are dispatched in response to 9-1-1 calls; not having complete address information such as building name, floor and/or room number adds precious minutes to emergency response. It is also very distressing for emergency service providers to rush to what the 9-1-1 database indicates to be the location of the emergency, only to find out that the emergency is at another location in town or even in a neighboring town. This is due to the 9-1-1 database only containing the address of your PBX switch, which is not always at the same address as the actual phone line.

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) has documented options and guidelines for multi-line telephone system compliance with Enhanced 9-1-1. NENA has identified a compliance threshold: workspaces that are less than 7,000 sq. ft. on a single level, located on a single contiguous property, are not required to provide more than one emergency response location. Visit their website at www.nena.org.

Feel free to contact us at E911-info@state.vt.us with specific questions regarding compliance with Enhanced 9-1-1 in Vermont.

Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Multi-Line Telephone System Waiver Criteria

The Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board (Board) may waive the provisions of 30 V.S.A., Chapter 87, §7057 as long as it is satisfied that the level of service being provided is comparable to the level of enhanced 9-1-1 service available to the rest of the telephone-using public.

Waivers may be granted on a case-by-case basis, provided that the multi-line telephone system owner and the Board reach written agreement on audit or certification procedures. Waivers will be reevaluated annually.

The following checklist will be used in assessing the level of 9-1-1 service provided by a multi-line telephone system.

1. The level and quality of ANI and ALI must be comparable.
2. If the multi-line telephone system owner/operator wants to be the primary answering point for internal 9-1-1 calls, it must:
 - a. Ensure that its dispatchers meet the Board's training and call handling standards for police, fire and EMS emergencies;
 - b. Staff the dispatch center 24 hours a day, 365 days a year;
 - c. Have the capability to establish contact with the appropriate police, fire and rescue services;
 - d. Provide adequate back-up communications to ensure access to emergency services in the event of a failure within the multi-line telephone system;
 - e. Provide call handling/dispatch equipment that is comparable and compatible with the PSAP equipment provided by the Board;
 - f. Implement adequate procedures for proper administration of the database.
3. Since 9-1-1 calls are for police, fire and EMS without distinction, routing a 9-1-1 call to a Primary PSAP then back to the private system for dispatch must clearly decrease the level of service to the caller.